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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Janet Ecker named minister



Janet Ecker

Janet Ecker was appointed Minister of Community and Social Services on Aug. 16, 1996.

In July 1995, Premier **Mike Harris** appointed her as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In November, then-Minister **David Tsubouchi** assigned her the responsibility of leading the review of child care for the province. Ms. Tsubouchi is now the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

Janet Ecker's political career began on June 8, 1995, with the election of the Progressive Conservative government. She represents Durham West, a suburban riding just east of Metropolitan Toronto.

Community living expands

As announced by then-Minister **David Tsubouchi** on July 23, three of our facilities for people with developmental disabilities will close and the remaining three will downsize by the year 2000.

A total of 978 residents — 428 from the closing facilities and 550 from the downsizing facilities — will be living in community settings by Mar. 31, 2000. This announcement builds on the province's long-term commitment to move people with developmental disabilities back into the community.

Here's how the changes are expected to take place:

- Midwestern Regional Centre in Palmerston will close by Mar. 31, 1998. It currently has 76 residents and 216 staff.
- Prince Edward Heights in Picton will close by Mar. 31, 1999. It currently has 218 residents and 414 staff.
- Adult Occupational Centre in Edgar will close by Mar. 31, 1999. It currently has 134 residents and 263 staff.

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Ontario Works gets under way

by Julia Naczynski

Since the 20 first sites for Ontario Works were announced on June 12 by then-Minister **David Tsubouchi**, area office and local staff have been forging ahead with our municipal partners to develop the program and prepare for implementation this fall.

A staff member has been selected in each area office as the ministry's key contact person for Ontario Works. In the areas of the province where Ontario Works sites were selected, those staff are now working with representatives from the municipality or county to develop the business plans that will be submitted to the ministry for approval. (To see who's working on Ontario Works, see the box, **Who's who in Ontario Works**.)

Ministry staff who are developing Ontario Works are mostly program supervisors; others have worked in income maintenance or vocational rehabilitation services, and are familiar with employment programs. The municipal staff who are working with

them locally are employed in social service departments or municipal employment programs.

Two joint meetings have been held in Toronto of ministry staff and their municipal partners since the first-site selection was announced, first on June 14 and then on July 18. The 20 first sites will be poised to implement their programs pending approval of their business plans. More sites will be announced in the fall.



Ontario Works

Ontario's work-for-welfare program

There are three components to

Ontario Works: community participation, employment support and employment placement. In these early stages, the program applies to employable recipients of General Welfare Assistance (GWA).

Community placement will involve the municipality and local community groups sponsoring worthwhile projects that have been developed locally; the groups can include public, volunteer,

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Caseworker rolling out

by Julia Naczynski



Julie Naczynski photo

Toronto Area Office manager **Barb Sounders** snipped the ribbon to officially "open" Caseworker Technology at the 770 Birchmount Family Benefits office in Toronto. Helping her was **Colin Rowe**, implementation project manager for the Toronto offices, and **Carol McCann**, who led the implementation at Birchmount. Caseworker went "live" at Birchmount on Aug. 12 and is the first of the Toronto offices to use it.

The implementation of Caseworker **T**I, the computerized system that is transforming the way income maintenance staff do their work, has been proceeding well.

The Automating Social Assistance Project, or ASAProject, has gotten a number of sites up and running with

Caseworker since our Brantford Family Benefits office went "live" with the first release of Caseworker in March of 1995.

So far, among the provincial (Family Benefits) offices, Caseworker has now been implemented in St. Catharines, St. Thomas, Simcoe, Woodstock, Whitby,

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Directives on demand by fax

Management Board Secretariat has introduced Fax-On-Demand, an automated system to provide government employees with the current version of any Management Board Directive.

MBS has advised that this will now be their only method for providing Directives to ministries. Also, you should know that because this change makes our ministry's MBS database redundant, it is being deleted from our electronic manuals system on DEC (SERCHmate).

However, as part of its financial policy role, the Financial and

Administrative Services Branch will continue to interpret MBS Directives and their impact on ministry operations and business processes. The branch will continue to update our policies and procedures as needed, and they will continue to be inserted in the Electronic Ministry Manual of Administration.

Fax-On-Demand can also provide you with OPSEU and AMAPECO documents and interpretive bulletins.

If you have any problems or questions about Fax-On-Demand, contact Ramesh Sharma at the MBS Corporate Policy Branch (416-325-1287).

To order Directives:

1. Decide which fax will receive the document, have that fax number handy and make sure the fax is ready to receive.
2. On the telephone, dial 416-325-7152 [Fax-On-Demand] within Queen's Park you can just dial 5-7152.
3. To order a current Directives Index, press 1 and follow the instructions; or, if you know

the document number of the Directive(s) you want, press 2 and follow the instructions. (The Index will list all the Directives available and tell you the four-digit number you need to use to place your order.)
The document is sent immediately to your fax machine.

Caseworker

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Loris Dumanian of the ASAP project demonstrates the advantages of Caseworker to Hilda Jetter, who will implement the new system in the Waterloo Area Office. A demonstration/model office is set up on the 6th floor at 880 Bay Street, where many staff are receiving training on Caseworker.

Lindsay, Peterborough, Port Hope, Chapleau, Espanola, Little Current and Gore Bay.

Besides nine Family Benefits offices within the Toronto Area Office, other provincial offices on the short list for 1996 implementation are in Aurora, Clinton, Stratford, the North Bay Area and the Ottawa Area Office (Rideau, Laurier and Coburg streets).

As reported in the December/January 1996 issue of *Dialogue*, Caseworker Technology is a computer-based system of software and hardware that reduces paperwork and duplication of effort and will help prevent errors and detect fraud. Eventually it will be used in all ministry Family Benefits offices and in all municipal General Welfare offices. It will affect all 170 provincial and municipal social assistance delivery sites and some 7,000 income maintenance workers across Ontario.

Already a second release of the Caseworker application (GWT 1.18) is under development and due to be piloted this fall. This maintenance release eliminates small "bugs" with better ways of processing information and introduces some new functions such as a case management report subsystem, access to the federal

income tax tables and an automatic archiving process.

One question that has arisen since Caseworker began is what will happen to the project in the event that a single-tier delivery system for social assistance is adopted in the province. Right now, there is a two-tier system: the province looks after Family Benefits, while the municipalities look after General Welfare. A single-tier delivery system, now under discussion by the province and its municipalities as part of what's been called the "who does what" exercise, might change that.

Social assistance reforms such as Ontario Works and a guaranteed support plan for seniors and people with disabilities are other factors that may affect Caseworker.

The interim strategy is to continue implementation of Caseworker at sites where dollars spent in retrofitting will be the lowest, says ASAP director Janet Faas. "We want to continue making the benefits of Caseworker available to sites doing business," she says. The interim solution is to limit the investment made in each site that is implemented. For example, software and training will go ahead; upgrading of hard goods, such as ergonomic furniture, will wait until later.

Take Our Kids To Work™

Mark Wednesday, Nov. 6 on your calendar and plan now to participate in the third annual Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Ministry staff are encouraged to bring a Grade 9 student (your own or a friend's, or be a volunteer for the day) to their workplace. This province-wide event is aimed at providing young people the opportunity to see different

roles and responsibilities in the workplace, and show them in a hands-on way the link between education and the work world.

Next year, Take Our Kids to Work "goes national" on Nov. 5, 1997.

If you need information about Take Our Kids to Work Day, contact Irv Kirstein at the Communications and Marketing Branch at 416-325-5196.

Analyze your audience

**PLAIN
LANGUAGE
PLEASE**

When you use plain language, what you write is determined by your purpose for writing; how you write should be determined by your audience's reasons for reading.

Before you start writing, you need to think about your audience and ask yourself these questions:

- Who are my readers?
- How fluently do they read?

- What do they know about the subject?
- What beliefs and attitudes do they have about the subject?
- Why will they be reading this document?
- Where will they be reading it, and under what conditions?

The answers to these questions should be your guide in how you organize your document and how you structure your sentences.

Renting vehicles for business

The ministry and Management Board Secretariat have agreements with two different vehicle rental agencies if you need to use a vehicle for government business. Field offices and all other ministry staff can make use of these arrangements.

ECARS/Enterprise Rent-A-Car offers the best rates and if you use an American Express corporate card to fully pay for the rental, you can avoid the cost of a collision damage waiver (usually that's \$10 extra per day). An economy-sized car rents for \$26.99 per day with unlimited kilometres. To

book, call Carlson Wagonlit Travel at 1-800-615-2277 or any of the 72 ECARS locations in Ontario.

Budget Rent-A-Car offers an economy-sized model for \$36 per day with unlimited kilometres. Call 1-800-268-8900 to book.

More details about the OPS car rental program were included in an e-mail from Financial and Administrative Services Branch to financial services staff dated July 26. You may also contact **Rene Andriada** at 416-327-4600 or **Stephen Chan** at 416-326-8109, both at FASB, for more information.

People and Places

John Rabreau left MCSS on Sept. 9 to become the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Division with Management Board of Cabinet. He began his career with MCSS in 1979 as a program supervisor with Children's Services in Thunder Bay, later becoming the Area Manager. In 1984 he was appointed Regional Director of the North Region. He came back to the ministry to manage the Income Support Reform Project.

Marcia Nelson has become the Manager of Program Planning and Development at the Corporate Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs Branch. She was previously a Senior Policy Advisor. Marcia is currently away on maternity leave.

Connie McCandless has left her position as Director of the

ministry's Information Systems Branch to join a private sector firm.

Kathy Macpherson has left her position in Workplace Safety and Accommodation to return to school in Vancouver. She is taking the Asia-Pacific Management Cooperative Program, which involves one year of school and one year of work in the Asia-Pacific region.

Indira Singh has accepted a one-year secondment to a senior management position with the Business Improvement Division at the Ministry of the Attorney General, which began Aug. 1. She will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating business planning projects and corporate change initiatives. In our ministry she was Senior Manager of the Equal Opportunity Unit.

IN MEMORIAM: Frank Rintoul



Francis "Frank" Rintoul passed away suddenly on June 9, 1996 at the age of 45, after 23 years of service at Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls.

He started as a residential counsellor and most recently was the residential supervisor at the centre's Behaviour Modification Service, a program he was instrumental in helping to establish.

Throughout his career at Rideau, Frank was passionate about achieving

excellence in whatever endeavours he undertook. He refused to accept second-best for the residents or staff he worked with. As a colleague who worked with Frank over the years stated, "I can well remember the fun we had working together and the commitment we felt to the residents' betterment." He will be missed by the residents he served and his fellow staff members.

On a personal level, Frank had a deep loyalty to his roots in Lanark County. He was an extremely involved, proud and dedicated father and husband. Our sympathy and prayers are with his family, and in particular, his wife Jessie and his children Jason, Julia and Krystal.

IN MEMORIAM: Margaret Snowden



We are saddened to announce the loss of a friend and colleague, Margaret Snowden. Marg passed away April 18, 1996

after a courageous battle with cancer.

Marg joined the ministry's Crown Ward Review Unit in 1984 and is best remembered for her unflagging commitment to improving the quality of life for children in care. Her insistence on quality case management practices and sound permanency planning has had a significant impact on the lives of countless children all over the province. In addition to her responsibilities as a Crown ward

reviewer, Marg was often called upon by children's aid societies to assist or consult on issues.

Prior to joining the ministry, Marg worked for 20 years at Metro CAS (Scarborough office).

These are but some examples of the compassion and strength of character she brought to her life, her family and her job. She will be greatly missed by all of us whose lives were so enriched by having known her.

Besides her husband Harry, Marg is survived by her mother Bessy, daughters Lynn and Leslie, sons Michael, Rob, Joel and Jeremy, daughters-in-law Linda and Elizabeth, son-in-law Roy and five grandchildren.

Contributions in Marg's memory can be made to the Brain Tumor Foundation, 111 Waterloo St., London, ON N6B 2M4.

It's the United way

The annual United Way campaign is beginning this month in your workplace. This campaign benefits many worthy charities in your own community, so please don't forget to give, and to participate in fundraising events in your workplace. Payroll deduction is the "painless" way to give — why not try it this year if you haven't done so before?



Internet policy and access

A ministry Internet policy which includes two access options has been drafted by Information Systems Branch and is being reviewed throughout the ministry. Sign-off should occur in the fall and end the current freeze.

The policy states that "Connectivity to the Internet is a managed and secure process that is used only for business purposes."

The policy requires that any user requesting Internet access must prepare a business case for approval. Approval may be given if access is deemed essential for users to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

Regarding Internet access (a browser and e-mail), the Management Board Secretariat GOVONCA service (GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO CANADA) for Internet has increased substantially in price and does not provide user-friendly access and use of the Internet. Therefore, the ministry will be phasing out use of the MBS GOVONCA service, probably by the end of this year.

Access to the Internet for extensive users and users at locations with extensive network traffic is expected to be through a dial-up service. Extensive users regularly access the Internet, print documents and often download

documents and/or software. Extensive users may include:

- policy/program/planning analysts researching policy issues, interacting with government sites and downloading large documents;
- systems officers/systems specialists supporting ministry operations, networks and organizational units and downloading software or developing applications;
- technology planners investigating/evaluating technology solutions; and
- Communications and Marketing Branch staff maintaining the ministry's Internet site.

Access to the Internet for moderate users will probably be through the MBS MPR Dedicated Service. Moderate users intermittently access the Internet and print documents, but are not likely to download documents and/or software. Moderate users may include:

- Adoptions Unit staff accessing government and agency sites;
- financial analysts/advisors accessing government sites;
- purchasing officers interacting with vendor sites; and
- program supervisors interacting with transfer payment agency sites.

For more information, please contact Gary McCombs at 416-730-6569.

Library collection still available

The ministry library collection has become part of Ryerson Polytechnic University and is available to members of the public, including ministry staff. The ministry library and career centre was closed at the end of March and some materials were distributed to other offices and locations of the ministry. The bulk of the materials — in particular, the book collection, which included books on social and human services and social work — were given to Ryerson. The entire collection is located at the university's Library and Learning Resources Centre, 350 Victoria Street, 6th floor in Toronto. For information, call library administration at 416-979-5144.

dialogue

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